

Paddle UK Equality Policy

Introduction

This Equality Policy outlines Paddle UK's¹ commitment to equality; details what this means in practice and the steps that will be taken if people within the paddling community fall short of the commitments outlined.

Paddle UK recognises Sport England's definition of equality as outlined in the 2012 Sport Equality Scheme: "Sports equality is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society."

Paddle UK is committed to applying these principles of equality across paddlesport to ensure everyone can partake in paddlesport and realise their full potential in an equitable and welcoming environment.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of the underpinning values of Paddle UK, and we recognise our responsibility to tackle exclusion and discrimination wherever it occurs across paddlesport. This responsibility extends to our members, volunteers, participants, supporters, coaches, officials, job applicants and employees (together known as "stakeholders").

Equality Policy Statement

Paddle UK is fully committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and aims to ensure that everyone has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate in paddlesport at all levels and in all roles within the sport. Everyone within paddlesport should be treated equally regardless of; age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics").

In addition, Paddle UK will endeavour to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background.

Commitments

Paddle UK recognises its responsibility to act on the commitments outlined in this policy, and will ensure the policy is "lived" by undertaking, as a minimum, the following actions:

- Providing appropriate training to all of its employees, coaches and key volunteers to raise awareness of individual responsibilities;
- Working towards the equitable provision of its services to all sections of the community and avoiding disadvantaging any person by conditions or requirements that cannot be reasonably justified;

¹ Paddle UK is a trading name of British Canoeing which is a Company registered at Companies House with the registered number 01525484.

- Embedding equal opportunities into all policies, plans and strategies, and assessing the impact of this work on various communities, including protected characteristic groups.
- Upholding its organisational commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion as outlined under #WePaddleTogether;
- Ensuring the Board is kept up-to-date on all equality matters affecting the organisation, as well as reporting on our progress against the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan;
- Publicising this policy to all employees, members, and volunteers through its website, magazine and club mailings. The policy is also publicised to employees through the staff handbook and to all new members of staff through an induction.
- Displaying its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through the implementation of its Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and Strategy. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is reviewed annually and is open to consultation from all members and employees of Paddle UK every four years;
- Committing to the Equality Standard – having achieved the Preliminary level in 2008 and Intermediate level in 2012, we are now working towards the Advanced level.

Legal Responsibilities

Paddle UK is required by law, not to unlawfully discriminate against its Stakeholders. Paddle UK recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by, the requirements of, the Equality Act 2010, as well as any equivalent or amended equality related legislation that may be relevant and applicable to Paddle UK.

Paddle UK considers that paddlesport is a gender affected activity under the Equality Act 2010. In this regard, the Equality Act 2010 permits the separation of competitors, or the imposition of entry restrictions upon paddlers on the basis of age, sex, disability or nationality. This is permitted where it is necessary to do so to ensure;

- fair competition, or
- the safety of competitors, or
- compliance with the rules of a national or international competition, or
- selection can be made to represent a country, place or area or a related association.

Paddle UK also has a separate policy in relation to participation in paddlesport by transgender individuals. The Transgender and Transsexual Competition Policy should be referenced in instances relating to participation by transgender persons in competitive paddlesport.

Whilst there are instances where it is necessary and proportionate for certain restrictions to be imposed within competitive sport, Paddle UK strives to ensure a fair balance at all times between this need to uphold the safe and equitable delivery of sport and the principle of equal access for all, as well as its legal and moral responsibility to avoid unlawful discrimination.

Responsibilities of Paddle UK

The Board of Directors of Paddle UK will endorse and be responsible for ensuring this Equality Policy is implemented and will deal with any actual or potential breaches. The Chief Executive of Paddle UK has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy while the Director of Governance and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead have responsibility for managing the implementation of the Equality Action Plan.

All employees, volunteers and members of Paddle UK have responsibilities to respect, act in accordance with, and thereby support and promote the spirit and intentions of the policy.

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Paddle UK recognises that unlawful discrimination is unacceptable and will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. Paddle UK regards any form of unlawful discrimination as serious misconduct and any employee, volunteer or member who unlawfully discriminates against, harasses or victimises any other person will be liable to appropriate disciplinary action. Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms:

- **Direct Discrimination:** treating a person less favourably than others would be treated in the same circumstances on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic they possess.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** occurs when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies in the same way for everybody, but has a disproportionate and detrimental effect or particularly disadvantages people with a certain Protected Characteristic. In such circumstances the person with the Protected Characteristic will be indirectly discriminated against if they are put at that disadvantage, unless the person applying the practice, policy or rule can objectively justify it.
- **Discrimination by perception:** occurs when a person is discriminated against because they are thought to have a particular Protected Characteristic.
- **Discrimination by association:** occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a Protected Characteristic.
- **Harassment:** described as inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that are objectionable or cause offence to the recipient or any other individual affected by such conduct.
- **Bullying:** described as the misuse of power, the act of criticising persistently or to humiliate and undermine an individual's confidence.
- **Victimisation:** described as when one person is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action under one of the relevant Acts / Regulations or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

Implementation

A copy of the policy is available to all employees and volunteers working for Paddle UK and subsequently distributed to all staff, Board members, and key volunteers. The policy will be integrated into the induction of Board, staff and key volunteers. The policy will also be made available on the Paddle UK website. Members, Clubs, Centres, Providers, Consultants, advisors, and - where appropriate - suppliers to Paddle UK will be required to abide by this

policy and it will be referred to in any service level agreements or contracts issued by Paddle UK.

Amendments to the policy will be implemented immediately after approval has been received from the relevant Board.

Reasonable Adjustments

Paddle UK recognises that it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Paddle UK will consider all requests for adjustments and where possible will accommodate reasonable requests and will work with disabled Stakeholders to implement any adjustments that will enable them to participate more fully in all Paddle UK activities.

If an individual requires a reasonable adjustment to access any of Paddle UK's services, resources or delivery, they should contact the relevant department using contacts found on the Paddle UK website. In the alternative, they can contact equality@paddleuk.org.uk directly. Any request will be signposted to the correct department or individual who is best placed to support you with your request.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Paddle UK will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, equality monitoring data of members, and the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan regularly and will review the policy at a minimum of every three years.

Complaints and Disciplinary

Paddle UK takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy by any Stakeholder, with any breach being dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary, complaint or grievance procedure as is appropriate in the circumstances. Where any violation of this equality policy amounts to a criminal offence, the appropriate authority will be informed.

If any employee, member, volunteer or official believes they have suffered discrimination or other inequitable treatment within the scope of the policy, they can raise their concerns via email to equality@paddleuk.org.uk. Referrals will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated as appropriate.

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